

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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General Characteristics of Yugoslav Education

1. The Yugoslav educational system is generally outmoded and dominated by low educational standards. Few innovations have been introduced into the prewar educational system, and such innovations have been merely superimposed upon the already existing system. The following are some of the unfavorable characteristics of present-day education in Yugoslavia:
 - a. Antiquated techniques and subject matter;
 - b. Failure to train students in independent thinking owing to the compulsory imposition of Marxian dialectics at various levels of education;
 - c. Control and direction of the entire educational system by the Yugoslav Government;
 - d. Lack of scientific approach to various studies;
 - e. Neglect of factual material in favor of a completely theoretical approach to a subject;
 - f. Poor or inadequate preparation of students for study at higher institutions of learning;
 - g. Shortage of text books and educational equipment due in part to the high cost of such materials, i.e., text books cost 300 - 300 dinars each;
 - h. Encouragement of dillettantism among university students owing to the fact that no time limit is set for the completion of courses or for taking final examinations for a diploma or degree. Many students prefer to

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prolong their student status rather than to obtain their degrees and be appointed to some low-paid post in some remote village;² and

1. Social and economic handicaps of students from remote and poor areas of Yugoslavia, particularly Moslem girls from Bosnia.

Practical Philosophy of Education

2. The aim of the educational system established by Yugoslav educational leaders is to instill in the students the belief that they exist for the State, rather than that the State exists for them. Students are indoctrinated with the idea that through their recognition and acceptance of the approved social-economic attitude of their environment, they will reap benefits which presumably only Marxian socialism can offer them. The scientific basis for the establishment of these correct reactions stems from the teachings of Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, Russian physiologist (1849 - 1936) and his successors, and from the extremely formal classroom methods employed in both secondary schools and universities. In secondary schools these formal teaching methods are manifested through the teacher-centered classroom and constant drill and repetition, while in universities they are manifested through the prevalence of lectures. These teaching methods are geared to produce the desired reactions. Theoreticians of the system are Russian educators Makarenko (fmu), Gruzdev (fmu), Uzinskiy (fmu) and the following Yugoslav writers:
 - a. Petaki (fmu), of the experimental psychology staff at the University of Zagreb;
 - b. Filipovic (fmu), writer on philosophy; attached to the University of Belgrade;
 - c. Mitra Mitrovic, on the administrative staff at the University of Belgrade;
 - d. Radovan Teodosic, professor of philosophy at the University of Belgrade.
3. Yugoslav educational leaders do not accept the educational principles of John Dewey or of Willien Hurdi Kilpatrick, American educators, whom they regard as reactionaries. Yugoslav educators believe that the theory of the child-centered school is designed to stress the individualism of the child, and fails to give the child a positive desire to devote himself to the performance of work essential to the building up of the socialist state. The concept of "learning by doing" is not disallowed, but the idealism of Dewey in stressing that the impetus must come from the innate and emotional needs of the child, is rejected. "Deweyism", according to the Yugoslav point of view, is an exact replica, in the educational field, of the anarchy, competition and lack of social control found in the capitalistic society which gave it birth. Inasmuch as the Yugoslav educational system was subject to strong criticism by the press during 1952 when many newly graduated doctors, veterinarians, engineers, and teachers remained in Belgrade and neglected their obligations to society, today the need for developing the proper classroom attitudes is constantly being stressed.
4. Nevertheless, Yugoslav educators are not blind Marxians. In pedagogical courses students are taught that Marx was not always 100 per cent right. Owing to their Marxian background, Yugoslav educational leaders cannot see any midpoint between materialism and idealism (the Dewey dualism) and all behavior is considered learned behavior, hence, in their opinion, the learning process can be controlled. The Stanford - Binet intelligence tests have been translated into Serbian and are beginning to be used, since American experimental and testing techniques in education are rather widely admired.

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Role of the Teacher

5. In the average Yugoslav secondary school the teacher has an average of 45 students per class (university classes have a wide variance in registration), and the teacher has little time to become acquainted with the students personally. However, all teachers are required to devote some time to the Omladinske Grupe (Youth Groups), an extra-curricular activity. Often, but not necessarily, these groups meet in school buildings, their activity covering the gamut from chess clubs and camera clubs to folk dancing and other quasi-recreational joint activities. It is here that the teacher has the best opportunity for individual student contact.
6. Teacher training is an especially severe problem, since in actual practice it means training teachers in service in Marxian dialectics, and providing them with a Marxian methodology for their particular field. This problem has been met, if not completely solved, by required university extension courses of four to five hours a week.

Curriculum

7. The most important development in subject matter is the new course in moral training, which is being given this year on an experimental basis in certain selected schools. The course, designed for elementary and secondary schools, has as yet no syllabus, text or formalized method of presentation. Each school participating in the program is free to set up its new course as it feels it best can, and teachers are responsible for submitting results, analyses, criticisms and suggestions based on the needs of the State, rather than on the fundamental needs of the pupil. The course is projected on a nine-year basis, with one or two hours a week of class time. The elementary school curriculum will stress hygiene, both personal and social, a field in which there is a great deal to be done, particularly in rural areas of Yugoslavia. One of the largest problems in the administration of elementary schools is that of vandalism, defacing of desks and other school property, dirtying of lavatories, etcetera. The Yugoslavs hope to control this problem by teaching the child his role in the socialist state, and making him realize the meaning of community property. The problem of cheating is especially serious at the gymnasium level. Here the child will be taught that cheating is strictly a capitalist vice, stemming from the uncontrolled competition found only in capitalist states. It is not necessary for the socialist student to cheat; the important thing is that he direct his energies to "socialist competition," where his efforts will be properly and fairly evaluated. The encouraging of respect for school property and more advanced work in personal and social hygiene will be in the curriculum of the gymnasium also.

Marxian Indoctrination³

8. Although all courses are supposed to be given the Marxian slant, there is comparatively little formal training in Marxian ideology on the gymnasium level. All gymnasium students, however, are required to take a one-year course entitled "Ancient and Modern Philosophy", which is, in essence, a course in Marxism. Ancient philosophers like Plato and Aristotle are dismissed as reactionaries, since they are idealists. At university level the time devoted to Marxism varies according to the faculty in which the student is enrolled; students enrolled in the Technical and Medical faculties being completely exempted. All other university students take at least one year of Marxian philosophy, and students in the educational field are required to take a five year course in Marxism. The stress in university courses is on methodology, the aim of which is to inculcate correct Marxian thinking.

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Anti-American Sentiments

9. In his contact with Yugoslav schools the informant has never heard any forthright attacks on the United States; however, in contemporary history courses taught at gymnasium level, the teacher explains the participation of the United States in World War II as based on purely economic needs and to bolster American imperialism. Current American aid to Yugoslavia is explained as being based strictly on American long-term economic needs. American capitalism is not treated as a dangerous enemy as it stands in its current stage of development, with its current problems.

Faculty of Education

10. The faculty of the School of Education at Belgrade University is reported still to consist largely of prewar members. During prewar days these individuals were either Communist or extremely leftist in their views. There has been no great influx of new and hastily trained professors to help set up a new educational system. Professor Radovan Teodosic, a member of the Yugoslav Communist Party and a philosopher, teaches History of Education and Methodology at the University of Belgrade. Teodosic is about 50 years of age, soft spoken, sharp in perception and very sure of himself. The informant described Teodosic as the only pleasant Communist Party member he had met. Teodosic has read Dewey's "Problems of Man", and would be interested in reading more of Dewey's works if they were available. Teodosic is narrowminded relative to the American system of education. According to statements he has been heard to make on different occasions, he disapproves of the United States system of education. He considers it a "systematized lack of system" suitable for maintaining a capitalist society. However, he reportedly believes Yugoslavia could learn from United States educational practices, since even a capitalist society could not be 100 per cent wrong in its educational psychology and philosophy.

Textbooks

11. Textbooks used in Yugoslav educational institutions vary widely in their origin. The majority of technical texts used are translations of Western works; Yugoslav texts are used in elementary schools, and at least one Russian text, "History of the Middle Ages," by Dolnicikov (fmu) is used in secondary schools.

25X1 Best Features of Yugoslav Education

12. [redacted] the following are the two best features of Yugoslav education:

- The emphasis given to the Pioniri, Omladinske Grupe (Pioneer, Youth Groups), which appear to be effective in their program since they keep children off the streets and engaged in worthwhile activities; and
- The "Diplomski Rad," the special topic of research required for every university student before graduation. This is roughly comparable to the thesis required for a Master's Degree in the United States. Worthwhile problems are encountered by students in completing this research requirement.

New Schools

13. The Yugoslav Government has made a serious and successful effort to establish more schools in rural areas.⁴

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25X1 Success of the Yugoslav Educational System

14. [redacted] 80 per cent of the students are pro-Communist in their sympathies, inasmuch as they tend to use the Marxian point of view.

25X1 [redacted] Comments

25X1 1. [redacted] a Yugoslav educator who visited American schools during August 1952 contrasted the great amount of academic freedom enjoyed by American teachers with the strict government supervision and control of Yugoslav professors and teachers. He stated that in Yugoslavia academic freedom had decreased greatly since the end of World War II, and that the policy of the Yugoslav Government is apparently to limit knowledge of other countries, as far as teaching of students is concerned.

25X1 2. [redacted] the Yugoslav Government has had considerable difficulty in inducing professionally trained personnel to leave the relative comfort of large cities and relocate themselves in smaller communities in the interior of Yugoslavia. This resistance has spread to university students who use every possible means to delay obtaining a diploma which would make them subject to government regulations relative to the distribution and assignment of professionally trained personnel.

25X1 3. [redacted] all students at the University of Zagreb are required to take courses on Marx and Lenin. These courses cover four hours a week, two hours a week of instruction and the remaining two hours for class discussion. [redacted]

25X1 [redacted] at the University of Belgrade first and second year students are required to take a two hour per week course on Marxism-Leninism. Until 1950 - 1951 compulsory examinations were held in this course, however, such examinations were to be made optional at the beginning of the 1952 academic year.

25X1 4. A report [redacted] cites the increase in schools in various parts of Yugoslavia.

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